

William Madison Wall, 1830 – 1869

By W. Dee Halverson

William Madison Wall, like his statue in the Heber City park, always appears larger than life. William was a courageous man who accomplished many heroic feats. He was willing to serve as a pioneer, soldier, peacemaker and civic leader. He was spiritual and committed in his faith. He served as an LDS Branch President in Illinois at the age of twenty, as one of the first Bishops in Provo, as President of the New South Wales Mission in Australia, and later as Presiding Elder of Wasatch County, and Wallsburg. He was a good strategist and engineer as evidenced by his performance as a Lieutenant in the Nauvoo Legion, as head of special army detachments sent to make peace with the Indians and Mexicans, as a builder of the first road through Provo Canyon, as a builder of forts and community buildings in Heber and Wallsburg for protection from hostile Indians and as a leader in colonizing and developing the early Utah Territory.

Wall was born on September 30, 1830 in North Carolina, lost his mother at age seven, moved several hundred miles to Illinois when he was nine, lost contact with his father at age ten and was placed by relatives with a mean-spirited bondsman who caused him to run away. Later he was welcomed into the home of William Haws and was treated as one of the children. Wall was an obedient and resourceful young man. At the age of nineteen he asked for and received the hand of Mr. Haws'

daughter, Nancy, in marriage. In 1842 he and Nancy, and the entire Haws family joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In 1843 the Prophet Joseph Smith called William Madison Wall to be president of the branch of the Church in Ramus, Illinois near Nauvoo.

In 1845 after being imprisoned with other LDS Church leaders, William Wall and his family were driven from their home in Nauvoo. They joined with other Mormons during the exodus to Council Bluffs, Iowa where they were asked by Brigham Young to grow crops to supply the groups setting out on the Mormon Trail for the Utah Territory.

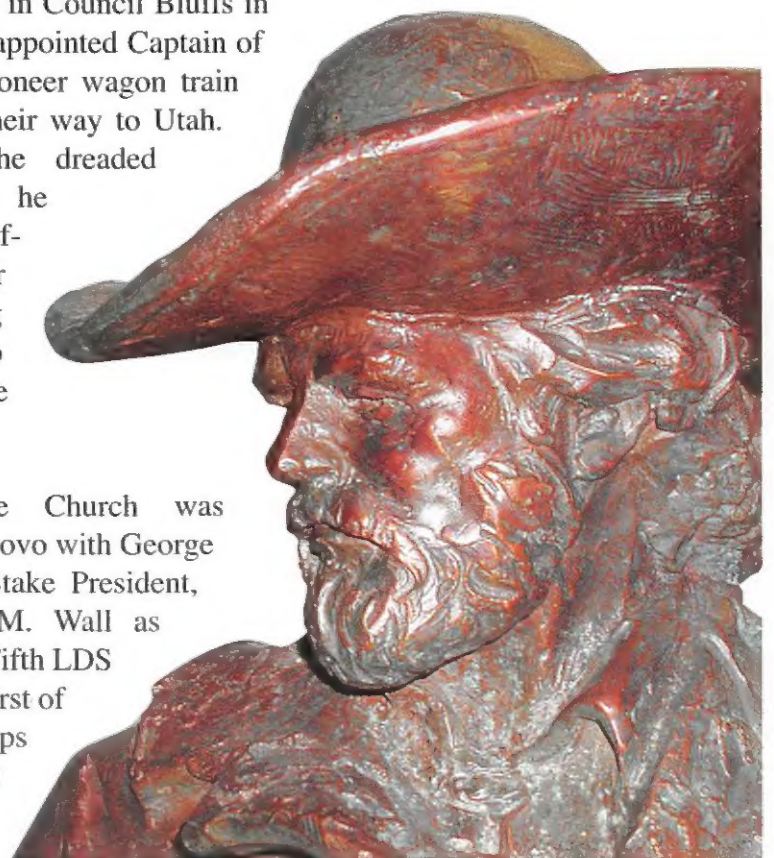
Wall was released from his responsibilities in Council Bluffs in 1850 and was appointed Captain of Fifty in the pioneer wagon train company on their way to Utah. He caught the dreaded cholera while he helped a grief-stricken father bury a young daughter who had died of the disease.

In 1852 the Church was organized in Provo with George A. Smith as Stake President, and William M. Wall as Bishop of the Fifth LDS Ward and the first of the five bishops to be ordained that day. Later that year as

captain of the Provo District Militia he was ordered to take thirty-five soldiers and travel through southern Utah to settle Indian disputes.

On April 10, 1856 William M. Wall was sent to Australia where he presided over the New South Wales Mission. In May of 1857 he was called home because of the threat of war with United States federal troops under the command of Col. Albert Sidney Johnson. After his ship docked in San Pedro, California in October 1857 with 60 LDS converts aboard, William was apprehended twice by apostates and renegades, who had heard of the

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William Wall cont

recent Mountain Meadow Massacre and were going to take his life. Due to his great courage and strength he escaped unharmed. He obtained wagons and supplies and escorted the new Australian converts to Utah. Immediately upon his return from Australia he was appointed Provo City Marshal, and Sheriff of Utah County where he struggled to peace between the U.S. soldiers and the civilians.

On June 6, 1858, President Brigham Young organized a company with William M. Wall in charge to construct a road up Provo canyon to make Heber Valley, Kamas, and other northern areas accessible.

During that same year he established the first homestead in Wasatch County with his ranch near Wallsburg.

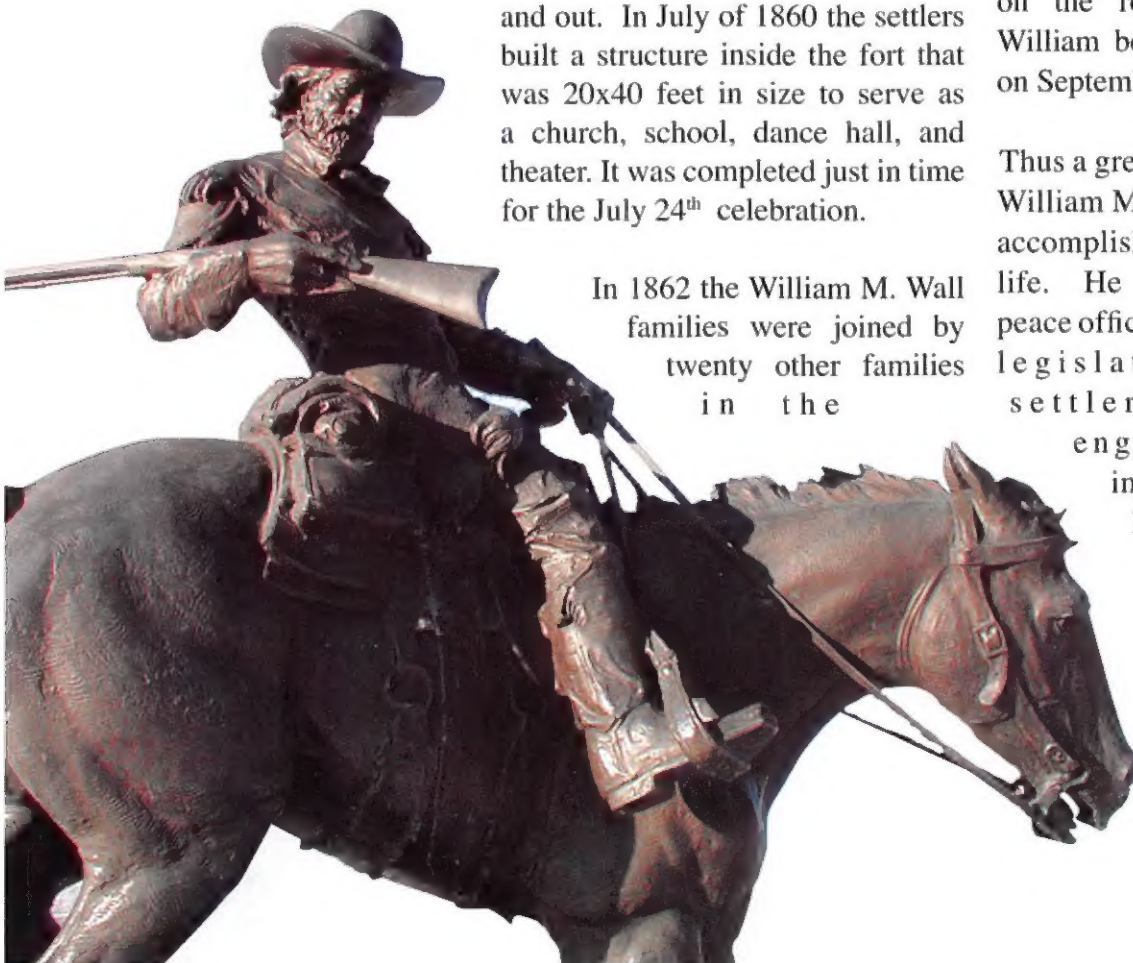
In the Spring of 1860 William Madison Wall was appointed by Brigham Young to be the Presiding Elder in the Heber Valley. He chose as his counselors John M. Murdock, and John M. Laird. By June there were more than 200 people living and working in Heber valley. Because of the constant threat of Indian attacks the settlers built a fort stretching from 100 to 300 West and from 200 to 500 North. The Heber Fort was surrounded by 66 homes and buildings with sufficient space in between each to let the livestock in and out. In July of 1860 the settlers built a structure inside the fort that was 20x40 feet in size to serve as a church, school, dance hall, and theater. It was completed just in time for the July 24th celebration.

In 1862 the William M. Wall families were joined by twenty other families in the

construction of a fort in Wallsburg which provided protection. It was from these early beginnings that the community started to prosper. During the Black Hawk War from 1866 to 1867 all of the families from smaller communities in Wasatch County moved into Heber for protection. William M. Wall was instructed by Brigham Young to take a small band of troops and 100 cattle and other gifts to Chief Tabby in Duchesne to obtain his promise of peace.

After being released from his church and civic duties, William M. Wall concentrated on his beloved ranch in Wallsburg. Later while working on the road in Provo Canyon, William became very ill, and died on September 18, 1869.

Thus a great career came to an end. William Madison Wall made major accomplishments throughout his life. He was a pioneer, soldier, peace officer, missionary, bishop, legislator, peace-maker, settler, construction-engineer, and most important an excellent husband and provider to his five wives and thirty children.



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